



IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion having a chamber therein that is pressurized to a pressure higher than that of the exterior thereof and used for transferring a wafer between a clean box having a lid and housing the wafer and the chamber, said apparatus comprising:

a first opening portion which is formed on a part of a wall comprising the chamber to be in communication with the chamber, facing to an opening of the clean box so as to allow loading and unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion;
and

a door that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed,

wherein a gas flow path from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion ~~is located around the first opening portion and~~ is formed such that a flow rate of gas flowing from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion in a case that the wafer transferring operation is not performed and the door closes the first opening portion becomes substantially equal to a flow rate of gas flowing out from a space formed from the chamber and the clean box, through a gap between a surface of clean box facing the wall on which the first opening is formed and the wall, in case that the wafer transferring operation is performed.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein [[a]] the gas flow path of the gas flowing out from the space formed from the chamber and the clean box in case that the wafer transferring operation is performed includes a space formed around the opening of the clean box, and
the gas does not flow into an inner space of the clean box.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein [[a]] the gas flow path of the gas flowing out from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion in case that the wafer transferring operation is not performed includes an aperture formed when the door closes the first opening portion.

Claims 4-12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion forming a pressurized chamber therein, said apparatus comprising:

a first opening formed on a part of a wall of the pressurized chamber formed by the mini-environment, the first opening being configured to face an opening of a clean box so as to allow loading and unloading of a wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion;

a door configured to open and close the first opening; and

one or more gas flow paths formed at least at a vicinity of edges of the door, wherein a flow rate of a gas flowing through the gas flow path is substantially equal to a flow rate of the gas flowing from the pressurized chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion through the opening when the door is opened.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the one or more gas flow paths include elongated flow paths provided substantially uniformly around the door.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the door is in substantially the shape of a square.